



News Release

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Contacts: [Kelly Stowe](#), Communications Office
[Marqise Allen](#), Communications Office

360-236-4022

360-236-4072

Childhood obesity prevention: let's all help Washington kids to get moving!

Less than half of Washington youth meet daily physical activity requirements

OLYMPIA — October 8, 2014 is International Walk to School Day, and the state Department of Health has an important message to Washington families – Let's get out, get moving with our kids, and help them walk or bike to school!

In conjunction with Governor Jay Inslee's launch of the Healthiest Next Generation Council, Walk to School Day is a great time to start incorporating physical activity into the daily routine for your child, and yourself.

Now that school has started, find ways to stay active with your children. Participate in walking school busses if offered by your school. A "walking school bus" is when one or more adults accompany a group of children as they walk to school. Another way to get more active is to join your school's wellness team to make sure your child's school has physical activity and physical education as top priorities.

Only about one-quarter of Washington 10th graders meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommended daily physical activity requirements of at least 60 minutes a day according to a recent Washington State Department of Health study. This is similar to what is reported nationally for 10th graders.

Being active during the school day can improve academic performance, yet participation in physical education declines in our state as students get older. By 12th grade, only 23 percent of high school kids report participating in daily physical education classes. Nationally, only 20 percent of 12th graders report participating in daily physical education.

In addition to lack of physical activity, about half of the 10th graders surveyed in Washington report three or more hours of screen time a day. This includes both TV and computer time.

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The CDC outlines three major strategies for states to help residents increase physical activity:

- More access to safe places for physical activity such as parks, sidewalks, and safe streets.
- Policies that improve streets and communities with designs that promote physical activity.
- Improve physical education and physical activity in schools and childcare.

Our Healthy Communities projects bring state and local government and community organizations together to help neighborhoods make it easier for people of all ages to walk, bike, and have safe access to parks, trails and transit.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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